

## HEDGEHOGS

Hedgehogs are also known as *agility domes*. They are brightly colored half-domes with a bumpy top. The dome is air-filled and compliant, making them difficult to balance on. The bumps stimulate sensors on the bottoms of the feet, providing more information about what's going on beneath the feet. The goal of this activity is for participants to walk across the backs of the hedgehogs.

### ***Benefits »***

- ⦿ Increases kinesthetic awareness.
- ⦿ Provides a difficult transitional challenge.
- ⦿ Takes courage and builds confidence.
- ⦿ Uses colorful, fun toys.

### ***Set It Up »***

You'll need a clear, safe area, near a handrail. I also recommend having an extra walker for participants to share. Hedgehogs or agility domes normally come in 6- and 10-inch (15- and 25-centimeter) sizes. You will need enough to place them 12 inches (30 centimeters) apart in a walking pattern (as if they were footprints) alongside a handrail.

### ***How to Do It »***

One at a time with you by their side, guide your participants across the hedgehog path. Get them to keep putting one foot in front of the other. Use the following cues:

- ⦿ Take your time.
- ⦿ Knees should be soft and posture upright.
- ⦿ Place your foot on one hedgehog and just keep traveling right over to the next hedgehog.
- ⦿ Your weight just moves towards and then over each hedgehog, from one to the next.
- ⦿ Can you look ahead two or three hedgehogs? It will help keep you moving forward smoothly.



### ***Give It More Balance »***

- ⦿ Place hedgehogs farther apart.
- ⦿ Place hedgehogs in a straighter line.
- ⦿ Put a few hedgehogs into River Fun activities (page 334) or obstacle courses (only if you can be nearby).

### ***Keep It Safe »***

Understandably, Hedgehogs are an advanced activity. But with a walker and you by their side, many participants of intermediate skill can cross over hedgehogs. It's a real "Wow! I did it!" confidence builder. I think all participants should try it with a walker first, and it should always be closely supervised by you.

### ***Live It »***

This tough activity takes balance control and integrates several systems of balance. These toys can really boost balance confidence.